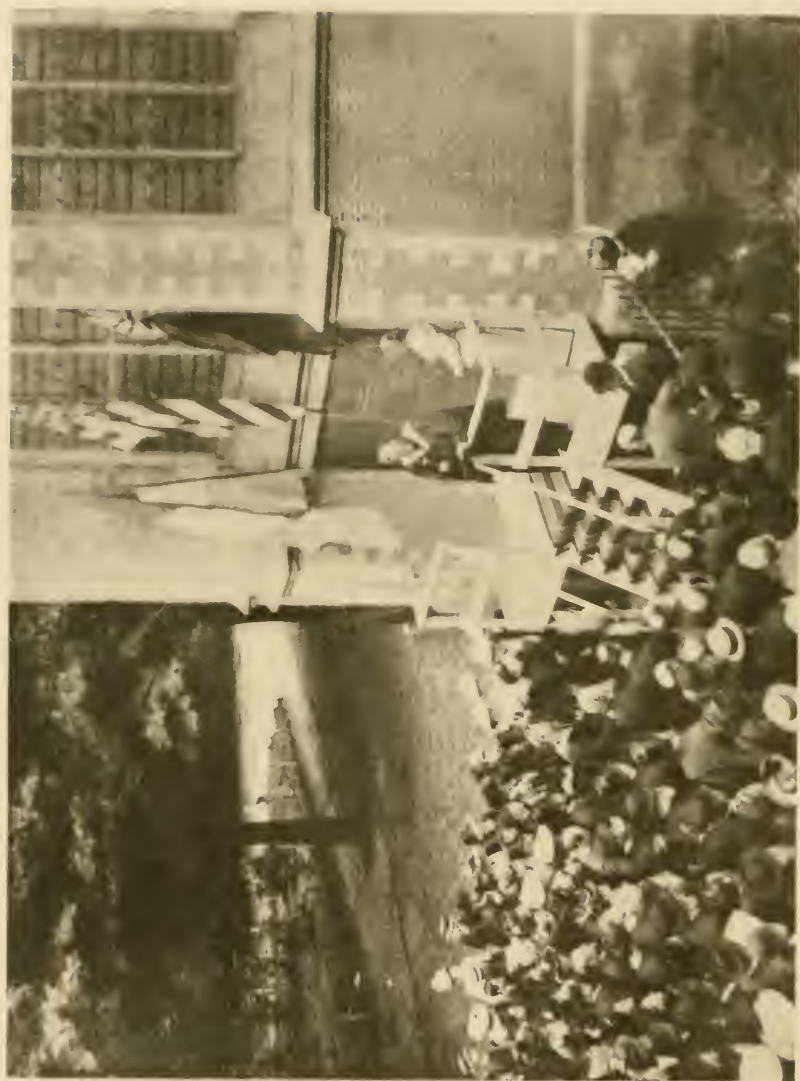


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THE JOHN ROBINSON
MEMORIAL TABLET.

LEYDEN, HOLLAND, JULY 24, 1891.



*Compliments of the Committee.
Wm. D. D. Sec.*

PROCEEDINGS AT THE UNVEILING

OF THE

JOHN ROBINSON MEMORIAL TABLET

IN LEYDEN, HOLLAND, JULY 24, 1891,

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ^{U.S.} CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES.

BOSTON:

Thomas Todd, Printer, Congregational House, 1 Somerset St.

1891.

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THE
JOHN ROBINSON MEMORIAL TABLET.

ON Friday, July 24, 1891, a bronze tablet in honor of Rev. John Robinson, pastor of the church of the Pilgrim Fathers during their residence in Leyden, Holland, 1608-1620, was unveiled in that city. It had been erected by the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States of America, in accordance with the action of the Council on the subject at its session in 1877, at Detroit. A committee representing the Council had charge of the exercises.

Early in the afternoon a procession was formed at the *Hotel du Lion d'Or*, and moved to the St. Peter's Church, on the outer wall of which is the tablet, and opposite to which is the site of the dwelling in which Pastor Robinson lived and the Pilgrims were accustomed to worship. The procession was headed by Rev. C. R. Palmer, D.D., and Rev. Morton Dexter, representing the Committee of the National Council, and Principal A.

M. Fairbairn, D.D., representing the invited guests. On arriving at the church, where a large company had assembled — including delegations from the International Council of Congregational Churches which had just closed its sessions in London, the Congregational Union of England and Wales, Yale University and Mansfield College, Oxford, and also many of the citizens of Leyden, not less than seven hundred in all — the dedication exercises were held.

Among those present were Rev. F. A. Noble, D.D., Rev. A. H. Ross, D.D., President W. F. Slocum, Rev. T. T. Munger, D.D., Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D., Rev. I. C. Meserve, G. Henry Whitcomb, Esq., Samuel Holmes, Esq., and the Hon. S. R. Thayer, United States Minister at the Hague, from the United States; Rev. Alexander Mackennal, D.D., Rev. John Brown, D.D., Rev. D. B. Hooke, Rev. G. S. Barrett, Rev. J. W. Harrison, and Mr. Henry Spicer, from England; and Rev. Thomas Roseby, LL.D., Principal A. Gosman, and Mr. Josiah Mullens, from Australia, as well as representatives of the city of Leyden, its Ecclesiastical Commissioners, its University, various religious bodies, and the military regiments there stationed.

As Prof. G. E. Day, D.D., the Chairman of the Committee of the National Council, was unable to be present, Rev. C. R. Palmer, D.D., acted in his behalf. At the appointed hour, two o'clock, Dr. Palmer, accompanied by his daughter, Miss Edith B. Palmer, Rev. Morton Dexter, and Rev. Alexander Mackennal, D.D., ascended the platform, and called the gathering to order. Mr. Dexter then read the

following historical statement, which had been prepared by Professor Day :

For the information of the company present, the following statement is made concerning the tablet in memory of the Rev. John Robinson, now about to be unveiled.

For the last twenty-six years the inscription, "On this spot lived, taught, and died John Robinson, 1611-1625," has marked the site of the dwelling of the revered pastor of the first settlers of New England ; but beyond this, it has been felt that some fuller expression of the honor in which his name is held by the numerous churches in the United States which accept the principles of ecclesiastical polity which he maintained and defended, is due to his memory. Accordingly, at the meeting of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States in Detroit in 1877, the following resolution was adopted :

Resolved, that the Council heartily accept the suggestion of the fitness and propriety of looking forward to the erection in some suitable place in the city of Leyden, Holland, of a monument to the memory of John Robinson, whose name will ever head the list of the pastors of the Congregational churches of the United States, and that a committee of seven be appointed to take measures thereto, with full power, when they shall see the way clear, to go forward and erect the same as a tribute to his memory.

The Committee consisted of the Rev. Drs. H. M. Dexter, S. C. Bartlett, and G. E. Day, and Messrs. Alpheus Hardy, A. S. Barnes, E. W. Blatchford, and S. S. Smith. The places of Messrs. Hardy, Barnes, and Smith, subsequently made vacant by death or resignation, were filled by the appointment of the Rev. Drs. J. K. McLean, C. R. Palmer, and W. A. Robinson. Dr. Dexter, to whose warm interest in the proposed memorial its successful execution is largely due, died in November, 1890, only a short time before the final arrangements were completed, and was

succeeded by his son, the Rev. Morton Dexter, who was appointed Secretary and Treasurer of the Committee.

The time required for determining the kind of monument to be erected, and for settling several connected questions, far exceeded what was originally anticipated. Many of the plans proposed were found to be impracticable or open to serious objections ; but, after a special visit to Leyden by two members of the Committee, it was finally decided that a bronze tablet occupying the niche or recess, about seven feet high by six wide, on the outside of that part of St. Peter's Church directly opposite the site of Robinson's dwelling, would exactly meet the conditions required. It would indicate in general the place of his burial, and at the same time be near to the place where the Pilgrim Fathers assembled for religious worship and to the famous University, to the privileges of which he was admitted, and on the records of which his name may now be seen.

To the application made to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in charge of the church buildings in Leyden for permission to place the proposed tablet in this recess, a courteous and favorable answer was returned, coupled only with the reasonable condition that the inscription should be submitted for their approval.

The tablet, which was cast in bronze, together with the raised letters, in one solid piece — the largest, with a single exception, ever made in America — is the work of the Henry Bonnard Bronze Co., of New York.

In accordance with a suggestion of Mr. A. S. Barnes, a figure of such a vessel as that in which the Pilgrim Fathers were borne to New England stands at the head of the tablet, with the inscription, "The Mayflower, 1620." The inscription itself, which covers, so far as the space permits, the most important points in the life of Robinson, and his connection with the first settlers of New England





IN MEMORY OF

REV. JOHN ROBINSON M.A.

PASTOR OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH WORSHIPING OVER SEAS
THIS SPOT. A.D. 1608-1633. WHENCE AT HIS DEPARTURE
WENT FORTH

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

TO SETTLE NEW ENGLAND
IN 1620.

BURIED UNDER THIS HOUSE OF WORSHIP & 170 YEARS
AFTER HIS DEPARTURE

IN MEMORIA AETERNA ERIGITUR

ERECTED BY THE NATIONAL CHURCH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS
CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A.D. 1891

and the Congregational churches of the United States, is as follows :

IN MEMORY OF

REV. JOHN ROBINSON, M.A.

PASTOR OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH WORSHIPING OVER AGAINST
THIS SPOT, A.D. 1609-1625, WHENCE AT HIS PROMPTING
WENT FORTH

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

TO SETTLE NEW ENGLAND
IN 1620.

BURIED UNDER THIS HOUSE OF WORSHIP, 4 MAR. 1625
ÆT. XLIX YEARS.

IN MEMORIA AETERNA ERIT JUSTUS.

ERECTED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A.D. 1891.

The fund in payment for the tablet and its erection in Leyden was raised by the voluntary subscription of pastors and members of Congregational churches in the United States.

By vote of the Committee a special invitation to attend the exercises at the unveiling of the tablet has been extended to all universities and theological seminaries in sympathy with Congregationalism, to the members of the International Council of Congregational Churches in London, to the Congregational Union of England and Wales and other gentlemen in Great Britain, to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners having charge of the church buildings in Leyden, to the magistrates and pastors of the city, the professors and students of the Leyden University, and to the citizens of Leyden generally. To the Rev. Charles

R. Palmer, D.D., pastor of the First Congregational Church in Bridgeport, Conn., has been assigned the duty of committing this monument to the memory of Robinson and the Pilgrim Fathers to the care of the authorities in Leyden, and of explaining the grounds on which the memory of Robinson and the Pilgrim Fathers is cherished by the Congregational churches in all parts of the world.

Rev. Alexander Mackennal, D.D., one of the representatives of the International Congregational Council, then offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, the God of our fathers and the God of us their children, we beseech Thee to look upon us as we are gathered here today, and to fill our hearts with thoughts of Thy goodness and with gratitude for the men whom Thou hast given to us. O Thou who Thyself art Love, and out of whose love comes eternal righteousness, we bless Thee for the men of old who have been Thy servants—interpreters of Thy holy will, interpreting to the churches which have come to them the mind, the authority, the rule of Jesus Christ our Lord. Especially we beseech Thee as we are gathered here today as the spiritual children of Thy servant whose name is upon our lips and in our hearts, that we may be filled with the spirit that animated him, the spirit of loyalty to Jesus Christ, fidelity to conscience, and a profound devotedness to Thy holy will. Give to us also, we beseech Thee, the sweetness which characterized him, so that while we witness to the truth we may witness to the truth of love. Make us zealous for the honor of Thy name and the glory of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and for the unity of Thy people. And grant that, as a result of this gathering today, the fellowship of Thy servants in Christ Jesus may be more fully apprehended; and, as we apprehend the fellowship of Christ Jesus, let

all other fellowships disappear, let all names become unknown but the name of Him Whom we trust, Whom we love, and Whom we serve—even the name of Christ Jesus our Lord—for Whom we bless Thee, Thine unspeakable gift—in Whose words we further pray :

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Dr. Palmer next announced the formal unveiling of the tablet, and Miss Palmer at once let fall its canvas covering, revealing it to sight, although still partly hidden by the three national ensigns which drooped above it. Meanwhile a military band in attendance played the appropriate air, *Integer Vitæ*. Miss Palmer then raised the Dutch flag to the top of its pole, the band giving the Dutch national anthem, "*Wien Neêrlandsch Bloed*;" next the American flag—its staff being in the center and higher than the others—while the band played "The Star Spangled Banner;" and finally the English flag, while the band rendered "God Save the Queen," the assembly applauding heartily.

Dr. Palmer then announced that the remaining ceremonies would be held within the church, and the procession was re-formed as before and entered the building, the band again playing *Integer Vitæ*, which the organ within took up as the pro-

cession appeared. After the audience had seated itself, the following familiar hymn, by the late Rev. Leonard Bacon, D.D., was sung by the congregation, the organ accompanying :

O God, beneath Thy guiding hand
 Our exiled fathers crossed the sea ;
 And when they trod the wintry strand,
 With prayer and psalm they worshiped Thee.

Thou heardest, well pleased, the song, the prayer ;
 Thy blessing came ; and still its power
 Shall onward through all ages bear
 The memory of that holy hour.

Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God
 Came with those exiles o'er the waves ;
 And where their pilgrim feet have trod,
 The God they trusted guards their graves.

And here Thy name, O God of love,
 Their children's children shall adore,
 Till these eternal hills remove,
 And spring adorns the earth no more.

Dr. Palmer then ascended the pulpit and delivered the following address :

My Countrymen, Brethren of England, Representatives of the Churches, the University, the City of Leyden ; Ladies and Gentlemen ; most heartily do I greet you.

Heaven smiles upon us today ! The fair and peaceful morning, the soft and genial air, the cloudless sky, the bright sunshine, bespeak the favor of Providence under which we have assembled to celebrate the performance

of a filial duty and to honor the memory of a great and good man. Beneath the ensigns of three nations, representing widely separate homes; with one heart and conscious of the sympathy of multitudes that are far away, we unite in these simple services of commemoration and dedication, under the benediction of the God of our fathers, the God of their children.

Standing where we do, on a spot so historic in this famous city, on the soil of this illustrious Commonwealth, thoughts of the past come unbidden. Remembrance of the changes and the conflicts through which the evolution of Western Civilization has marched enchains us. To many stirring recollections the special purpose of our assembling forbids expression. But of one movement we cannot help speaking—a mighty movement, the thrust of which has given direction to the history of nearly four centuries—the persistent, the ever intensifying and expanding struggle of men for personal liberty. The primary impulse of this movement was religious. It was the logical outcome of that insurrection of the human conscience which we call the Reformation. That which conscience demands, no power, ecclesiastical or political, provincial or imperial, autocratic, aristocratic, or democratic, can forever withhold. The wills of individual men may be subdued; their hearts may be broken; their lives may be embittered or extinguished; generations may be bound in fetters or led to the slaughter; nationalities may be extirpated; but the moral sense of mankind is irrepresible. It triumphs at last and reigns. A monk's assertion, against Pope and Emperor, of the rightful independence of the human soul in matters of religion, made necessary in due sequence a reconstruction of society, of which the end is not yet. The awakening in men and women of the sense of personal right, and of convictions of public duty, put enough passion into their hearts, and iron into their blood, to make them heroes; to render

them intolerant of wrong, and to mass them against the most formidable intrenchments of injustice, however defended. The development of the spirit thus generated has overturned, or brought to terms, the thrones of Europe, and filled America with free peoples. The world has become too wise to attempt to suppress it.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth the seeds of liberty which a divine enlightenment had been scattering broadcast in England for fifty years began to germinate, to take root and to grow. Nowhere can these seeds be discovered so readily as in the convictions of the advanced Puritans. Their watchword was reformation, but the real outcome of their conflict with repressive power was to be religious and political freedom for untold myriads. We are bound to remember this day the particular shape this conflict assumed. Hundreds and thousands of Christian people, in whose hearts there burned a passionate desire for a spiritual church and an unadulterated gospel, felt constrained to renounce the national church of England. They believed the further reformation of religion to be imperatively needful. Hopeless of seeing this effected within the national church—because the Episcopal party, who could promote it, would not, and the Puritan party, Presbyterian in its preferences, who would promote it, could not, and the two parties were in irreconcilable antagonism—they resolved upon “reformation without tarrying for any.” They separated themselves from the church by law established, and at the cost of everything which men hold dear, organized, by covenant with God and each other, what we know as Congregational churches, on what they conceived to be New Testament principles. Like other third parties, they were subject to ill will from both sides. They offended the party within the church which was zealous for further reformation, no less than the opposite party who believed reformation had already gone too far. To go forth, therefore, was to challenge

well-nigh universal execration. The step exposed them to be hunted as malefactors, to be persecuted, imprisoned, plundered, banished, executed. But forth they went, and the future vindicated their self-sacrifice and their faith. They became by the act the vanguard of advancing Christendom. Their heroic struggles, their unconquerable resolution in all this experience, make the period forever memorable. Nor did they struggle, dare, and endure, to no purpose. Posterity owes to them what it enjoys of religious liberty. Those Separatist communions were the pioneer free churches. By them was it distinctly perceived that a man's right to a sacrament was grounded not in his citizenship, but in his character and his confession of Christ. By them was definitely asserted the right of Christian men to freedom of faith and worship. By them was confidently claimed the non-dependence of the churches organized by Christian men and women upon priest or prelate, magistrate, Parliament or Lords in Council, Miter or Crown. In the end of the sixteenth century these rights were asserted. In the end of the seventeenth, they were extorted from reluctant rulers. In the end of the eighteenth, there stood secure, beyond the seas, free churches in free States. In the closing decade of the nineteenth, men are agitating for the Federative Union of Free Churches; holding Ecumenical Councils of Free Churches; and looking hopefully for the reunion of Christendom upon democratic principles. To the Christian peoples belongs the future; to the flocks, not to the would-be keepers, nor yet to the wolves. And of this majestic, resistless movement of the Christian world toward the liberty which is in Christ, we see the beginnings in that heaven-inspired separation of three hundred years ago!

In the autumn months of 1575, when this movement was but incipient, a man was born, destined in his less than fifty years of life to play an important part at the very

center of it — John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim Church. His birthplace, it is believed, was Gainsborough-upon-Trent, in Northwestern Lincolnshire, in which town the family enjoyed some local prominence. Of his parents, his childhood, his youth, we know nothing. His first distinct emergence is in his matriculation as a student in Corpus Christi College, in Cambridge, when he must have been close upon seventeen years of age. His name is still legible upon the college register. There he spent the years from the autumn of 1592 to 1600, taking successively the degrees of B.A. and M.A., and in 1599 winning a fellowship. Naturally enough his university life was by no means apart from the fierce discussions of this time. We know from various sources a good deal of the excitements which entered into it. Cambridge was full of Puritanism, and the disputes about it waxed hotter as the years went on. His sympathies led him into the Puritan party, and we know something of the men with whom these sympathies would ally him. Doubtless here the substratum of his theological opinions was deposited; but there is abundant evidence that they grew with his growth, expanded with his knowledge, and received ever fresh accretions while he lived. His years of academic study and discipline were laborious and fruitful, and made of him for his time a ripe scholar and a close reasoner.

When he left Cambridge, in 1600, he became engaged in the work of the ministry in or near Norwich, very probably as a curate. His Puritanism was so pronounced that the bishop of the diocese, who had been the master of Corpus Christi College during Robinson's residence, and knew him well, suspended him; and upon his continuing to preach in Norwich to a congregation of Puritan worshipers, subjected him "to great disturbance and affliction,"¹ and excommunicated his followers. He strongly preferred to retain his place in the national church, and,

¹ Ainsworth.

as he himself tells us, long resisted the conviction that his position was untenable. But in 1603 James I succeeded Elizabeth, and in the course of a year the situation became distinctly worse. In 1604 he saw no alternative but separation at any cost, and went to Cambridge to resign his fellowship and cast in his lot with those to whom reformation was dearer than the church of their fathers, than home or country, estate or life. To do this, he naturally went northward. At Gainsborough, his native town, centered the most considerable body of Separatists in the kingdom. Its members were drawn from a large area, extending into three counties. It had been organized some two years before, its members covenanting together "to walk in His ways, made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, *whatever it should cost them.*" Here Robinson found Brewster, and others of the Pilgrim Fathers of the future, and here he made the acquaintance of the estimable woman who afterwards became his wife, Bridget White. In 1606 the church, having become so large as to be too conspicuous, and subject to persecution from every side, divided into two for greater convenience and safety. The majority retained the organization, and in the same year removed to Amsterdam. The rest became the historic church at Scrooby, meeting there in William Brewster's house. Richard Clyfton was chosen pastor, and John Robinson teacher, of this body. For a year these devoted and resolute souls, in spite of many cruel hardships, baffled the malice of their enemies, but at last saw no hope but in emigration to Holland, and upon this they resolved. The plan was easier to conceive than to execute. Their opponents had as little disposition to suffer them to depart in peace, as to let them alone. It were untimely to rehearse here the long story of their exodus. Their repeated attempts to migrate in a body, their arrest in each, their harsh treatment, their detentions, their perils, their sufferings, their

losses, it is painful to recall. At length, in couples, in small groups, or one by one, the fugitive church evaded pursuit, and gathered in Amsterdam in 1608. But their difficulties were not yet over. The refugees collected in that city were many, and among them there were already discernible discordant elements. Robinson and his friends foresaw the coming conflicts, and felt that for themselves and their company Amsterdam was not the place. They resolved upon another removal, "even though it should be to the prejudice of their outward estate." Wise were they in this new sacrifice, and happy was its sequel. In 1609 they made application to the authorities of the city of Leyden for permission to settle there, "to the number of one hundred, or thereabouts." On the 12th of February this application was granted, and in that spring season the removal was effected. Clyfton electing to remain in Amsterdam, Robinson became the leader and afterward the pastor of the church. At last, then, in Leyden — "a fair city," "of a sweet situation," they thought it; a city at that time of a hundred thousand inhabitants — we see the hunted church, with none to molest or make afraid, locate themselves as best they could, and address themselves to the task of making a living by industry, and of governing their households in the fear of God. This task was the harder that most of them had been agriculturists, and now had trades to learn. But they were full of faith and of energy, and gradually their sterling worth won appreciation, and they found well-wishers and friends. In this and in their political obscurity was their safety. In January, 1611, Robinson and others purchased the house which then stood opposite this edifice, and when possession was acquired, made it the home of his family and the meeting-place of the church. In the spacious grounds in the rear of it, moreover, were built twenty-two cottages for his fellow exiles. In this situation he studied, wrought, and faithfully min-

istered for the remainder of his life, and here were prepared for their great adventure the goodly company of stout hearts and devout spirits who in 1620 set out for the founding of New England. Before that date the church was above three hundred in number, and in the archives of Leyden is the record that no complaint had ever been lodged against any one of them.

Upon his church, upon the community of Leyden, upon his generation, and through the Pilgrim Fathers upon the future of New England and of the United States, and even upon the England which had driven him from her shores but which he never ceased to love, John Robinson made an enduring, an indelible impression—an impression not rationally to be accounted for save in one way: it must have been the impress of a grand personality, grand in its moral, its intellectual, its spiritual resources. Of what sort was this pastor of the Pilgrims? What do we know of the *man*, of his make-up, his characteristic spirit, his gifts, his power?

No likeness of him exists; no description of his personal appearance. Not a single sermon of his has come down to us. Yet in the testimonies of Bradford and Winslow; in various utterances of friends and foes; in these three volumes of his collected works which we are this day to present to the University of Leyden, we have no limited means of taking the measure of the man as he was. In this University founded in the year in which he was born, yet already renowned when he came hither, he became affiliated September 5, 1615; and in it he gained a high reputation as a theologian and an enviable repute as a man. In public disputation, after the fashion of the day, he was the chosen champion of Orthodoxy against Episcopius, and won laurels for his cause and distinguished honor for himself. By his preaching and his publications he became widely known in Holland and in England, and his reputation has endured.

Competent critics have mentioned his "Essays, or Observations, Divine and Moral," in connection with the more famous "Essays" of Bacon, as "weighty with thought, rich in knowledge of mankind . . . sparkling with a kind of grave wit, and admirable for the best qualities of style." Of his controversial works, one of these critics — Dr. Leonard Bacon — recorded this judgment: "They show great familiarity with the Scriptures, great common sense in interpretation, a habit of logical exactness and acuteness, a practical ability in dealing with the profoundest themes in theology." Such facts would indicate to us one ranking among the leaders of men in intellectual power and culture. All the testimony points the same way. In the opinion of his Anglican opponents he was "a man of excellent parts, and the most learned, polished, and modest spirit that ever separated from the Church of England." His friends and followers naturally speak still more positively. Bradford says he was "a man not easily to be paralleled." Winslow says "he was much esteemed and revered of all who knew him, and his abilities were acknowledged both of friends and strangers." Mr. Motley, in his "Life of John of Barneveld," says of Robinson, "He was a man of learning, eloquence, and lofty intellect." Beyond question this was the conviction of his contemporaries, and must be accepted as the verdict of history. He must be credited with a vigorous understanding; with solidity of judgment, strong common sense, unusual aptitude for affairs; with well-disciplined powers, with scholarly culture and accomplishments, with extraordinary intellectual honesty, with both readiness and self-control. Nor was this all. This large-minded man was also large-hearted — a loving and a love-winning man. "He was much beloved of his people, and as loving was he unto them."¹ His care of them was most paternal and most comprehensive. He was wholly devoted to their

¹ Bradford.

religious interests, and "helpful of their outward estates." He had a benign and gentle spirit, great amenity of manners, and singular tact. He was sociable, affable, and conciliatory. He had a remarkable skill in harmonizing differences and settling disputes. He added to a tender conscience, and an acute moral sense, unusual consideration of the scruples of others. In his day controversy was merciless, and its masters were unsparing in personal vituperation and abuse; controversy was a public duty, and enlisted men's passions like internecine war. But forcible as are Robinson's controversial works, one is struck with their comparative freedom from the wrath and bitterness so characteristic of the period. Evidently he loved not strife and debate, and never lost, when borne into them, the temperance, the deliberateness, the loyalty to truth and the remembrance of charity which lifted him above all merely personal contests. Bradford tells us of Robinson: "He was never satisfied in himself until he had searched any cause or argument he had to deal in to the bottom; and we have heard him sometimes say to his familiars 'that many times, both in writing and in disputation, he knew he had sufficiently answered others, but not himself.' He was ever desirous of any light, and the more able, learned, and holy, persons were, the more he desired to confer and reason with them."

His most imposing virtue, perhaps, was his catholicity — his large tolerance. In this he outran his time. Dr. Bushnell declares him two whole centuries in advance of his age. The statement seems scarcely extravagant. He was a Separatist on principle; or, as he says, "on most sound and irresistible convictions;" and yet, contrary to the original Separatist theory, advocated putting a wide difference between renouncing a falsely organized church, and renouncing the ministers and members thereof, who were in the judgment of charity Christian people. He saw no reason to withhold private and unofficial communion with

these, or to disallow the hearing of godly ministers preach and pray in their own pulpits in the national church. He also favored full communion with the Reformed churches of France and Holland, and the interchange of members with them. And this large catholicity grew upon him to the end. If this does not seem to us a very wonderful liberality, it was extremely wonderful in its own day, and in its wide contrast with the Church of England itself. It was the recognition of this contrast which made Mr. Motley say of Robinson's Farewell Address to the Pilgrim Fathers, that "for loftiness of spirit and breadth of vision it has hardly a parallel in that age of intolerance." Nor was this liberality of Robinson a mere sentiment. It was a matter of principle. He instilled it into the minds of his people. He urged it upon their hearts and consciences. He infixed it there as an abiding conviction. They carried it with them to Plymouth. It became characteristic of the Plymouth Colony as contrasted with that of Massachusetts Bay. Not among them was Roger Williams forbidden to worship, or banished the soil. Not among them were enacted the New England Tragedies. History abundantly attests this abiding fruitage from the magnanimity of John Robinson, and his wise and most Christian counsels.

It is a mark of the greatness of this venerable man, that while the sturdiness of the convictions, and the recklessness of cost or sacrifice under the stress of convictions, which made him a Separatist, are beyond question, he has been distinctly recognized as one of the most conservative of Separatists, and as the reformer of Separatism. He was free from fanaticism. He never fell into, he never sympathized with, the extravagances into which many good men among his contemporaries were led. So far as the Separatists, by reason of the force of the impulse to which they had yielded, tended to extremes, he was distinctively a reactionary. If in the earlier years of his

ministry he was led by the intensity of his convictions into any narrowness of view, it is apparent that every year led him further from everything of the kind, and that by the force of the better reason he carried men with him into the enlargement he himself had experienced. And to him more than to any other man of his age is traceable that ultimate development of true liberality and charity toward all, which is the glory of modern Congregationalism.

What Robinson's religious character was appears from the testimony of those who knew him best, from the reverence in which he was held of all his people and the good report he obtained of those among whom he sojourned, and from his writings, especially his "Essays," and his letters. In this way we learn that he was characterized by a profound and spiritual piety; an intense loyalty to Christ as in all things his Master and Lord; singular reverence for the Scriptures as the rule of faith and conduct; an unconquerable trustfulness, giving him courage, fortitude, and assurance of the future; strong religious affections and unfailing sympathies; openness, frankness, transparent sincerity; an abhorrence of cant, pretense, and indirection; an exemplary walk and a scrupulous vigilance of himself; and his saintly spirit shone ever more brightly until the last. His decisive personal influence was largely founded in his conspicuous righteousness, fidelity, and disinterestedness.

Doubtless many of us will recall, at this point, an estimate of John Robinson by one of the most competent and careful students who ever investigated his history. It is the tribute of him who of all men, could the desires of his brethren have been gratified, should have lived to stand here today and dedicate a memorial in which he was so deeply interested. I mean my distinguished and lamented kinsman, Dr. Henry Martyn Dexter. It were a grave omission not to repeat in this hour his well-considered

ered and most forceful words : "That [John Robinson] was a good man, whose lustrous character was dimmed by no stain of indiscretion, roughened by no hardness of spirit ; who forsook all to follow what to him was Christ ; who had large faculties, and used them at his best discretion well for God and his fellows ; and who deserves the world's grateful and unqualified respect — no faithful student of his life and writings will deny. . . . Piety, learning, energy, catholicity, and faith in the future, in the first generation of the seventeenth century, would have saved any man from mediocrity. The final judgment of devout scholars must decide they made John Robinson GREAT."

The time came, as we all know, when Robinson and Brewster were convinced that duty to themselves, their children, and the kingdom of Christ, demanded the undertaking of a new emigration, to a land where they could be Englishmen and yet be free ; where they could perpetuate their own traditions, their own language, their own faith ; and where, please God, they might "lay some good foundation, or at least make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world — yea, though they should be but even as stepping-stones unto others for the performing of so great a work." Dr. Bushnell calls these adventurous spirits "great in their unconsciousness ;" aye, but they were also great by reason of that of which they were conscious, the inspiration of a great task, the prompting of a great calling, the dim but fascinating presentiment of a destiny of transcendent import to mankind. Into the history of that immortal adventure we cannot go at this time ; but it is part of John Robinson's record that he incited, promoted, counseled, and directed it, from its inception to its execution, and hoped to join the colony in due time, until he was summoned to a better inheritance above.

When, two hundred and seventy-one years ago this very week, the 22d of July, he returned to his home yonder, not without sadness of heart, after witnessing the embarkation at Delftshaven, he doubtless felt that much remained to be done here, and he had visions of a home beyond the seas. But anxieties, hopes deferred and at length rebuffed, domestic sorrows, and many discouragements awaited him, to chasten, but never to break his dauntless spirit. In less than five years his ministry was ended, for God took him. Unlooked for came the last messenger, but he was not unready. On the 4th of March, 1625, followed by the congregation, the ministers of the city, the University, and a sympathizing community, his remains were borne to their resting place beneath this ancient church, "amid lamentations for the loss that not alone his own communion, but all the churches of Christ had sustained." Yet although his life was ended, his work had but begun, and the abiding fame of it was unsuspected of men. Not only has that fame continued — its splendor has increased with every generation. And now at length we, descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, proud of their blood and their faith, messengers of five thousand churches and of uncounted Christian citizens in the Great Republic, are here to call to remembrance his inestimable services to Truth, to Liberty, to Civilization, to Christ's Eternal Kingdom, and by this tablet, which we are now solemnly to dedicate, to perpetuate that remembrance to coming generations. Fitly will it stand here, a silent but eloquent memorial, telling to listening posterity its story of faith and patience, of fortitude and magnanimity, of heroism and triumph! Yet it will not be John Robinson's grandest monument. That is the Great Republic itself, spanning the Western Continent, rising conspicuous among the nations, cherishing the exalted consciousness that in its broad area, and in its

intense life, civil and religious freedom far transcending the fathers' aspirations reigns universal, unassailable, enthroned in the hearts of ever-multiplying millions.

We do not wonder if Leydeners love their fair and famous city. We do not wonder if they take pride in their renowned University, itself a monument of the heroism of their fathers, and of an almost miraculous deliverance from their ruthless besiegers. But they must indulge us in the cherishing of a deep and tender interest in these scenes so familiar to them, which we can hardly imagine that they share. We come hither as to a venerated shrine. We find sacredness in these streets, and take pleasure in these stones. Here our fathers in a time of sorest need found a welcome refuge; a respite from cruel persecutions; an opportunity to house their hunted families and earn the bread their country denied them; liberty to labor, to love, to worship, and to learn; to fulfill their vocation of Christ; to gather wisdom, and energy, and courage for their great mission over the wide Atlantic to New England's rugged shore. Not without regrets did they leave this "goodly and pleasant resting place," but the beckoning of their destiny they could not resist. Dear and loving were the friends they left here, to meet them next in heaven. Tenderly they remembered Leyden. And here the dust of Robinson remains. These memories endear to us, and will endear to our posterity, the very name of Leyden. Long may its ancient towers salute the sun that rises, and be gilded by the sun that sets! Long may it flourish, foster learning, and rejoice! Happy and honorable be its future years! Often shall the western breezes bear to it the benisons of the children of the Pilgrims!

In closing, there come to me recollections of the parting counsels of Robinson, spoken over yonder¹ the night before the embarkation. I seem to catch the lingering

¹ Uncertain, but probable.

echoes of the words reported to us by Winslow. Let us listen for a moment : "I charge you, before God and his blessed angels, to follow me no further than I have followed Christ ; and if God shall reveal anything to you by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry. For I am very confident the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of his Holy Word. . . . But withal take heed what you receive for truth, and well examine and compare it with other Scripture before you receive it. For it is not possible that the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-Christian darkness, and the full perfection of knowledge break forth at once." Such was the spirit of this man of God, this apostle of liberty, this leader of his age ; so radical and so conservative ; so modest, so hopeful, so cautious. Wise beyond his generation, or his century, indeed ! Wise enough to counsel even us, his remote ecclesiastical descendants ; bidding us to be fixed in faith, free in the thinking which faith inspires, hospitable to the truth which God reveals through faith-inspired thought, tenacious of truth approved through past experience of its spiritual force. What can we counsel better than this in our own place and time ? The words in which he indicated to the Pilgrim Fathers their path across the ocean into the fateful future — the path which was to prove to them the way of greatness and of glory — still indicate to us the way into a future of ever expanding and ever brightening enlightenment, and inspire us with assured expectation of still grander triumphs of Christianity and of human freedom, and a larger, fuller, richer life for ourselves and for our posterity !

To Dr. Palmer's address, although delivered in English, unwavering attention was given to the end. When he had concluded, Rev. F. A. Noble, D.D.,

took his place in the pulpit, and offered the dedicatory prayer in these words:

Almighty and most merciful God, our Heavenly Father, in the name which is above every name we draw nigh unto Thee, that we may acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and render thanks for all Thy manifold loving-kindnesses. In all, and over all, Thy wisdom is manifest in the varying providences in which the world has been set forward in truth and in righteousness. Thou dost call great men and they answer Thee, and great events turn upon the issues which Thou Thyself hast determined. He whom we call the Father of the Faithful heard Thy voice and did Thy bidding. The great law-giver became Thy servant, and the leader of Thy chosen people out of their bondage into liberty, and through his lips came the commandments for the moral government of mankind. Through all ages the apostles and prophets have beheld the visions Thou hast placed before them, and have fallen into obedience to Thy divine will. We thank Thee for all of them, for the brave words they have spoken, and for the brave deeds they have done. Especially do we thank Thee for the gift of this man whose memory is to be perpetuated in part by the tablet unveiled today, in the midst of the community where so much of his life was lived, where so many of his words were spoken, where so much of his self-denial was practiced, and where he illustrated the grace of God in Christ so eminently. We thank Thee for the rare endowments which Thou gavest him ; for all the intellectual capabilities ; for his moral qualities ; for his spiritual insight and oversight ; for his apprehension of the truth ; for his fidelity to conscience ; for his patience ; for his love, and for his wise and sweet shepherding of the souls which came within the circle of his speech and influence. We thank Thee for those particular qualities he possessed by which he was en-

abled to become the leader of the people out into a larger place ; by which he could discern the needs of the times ; by which he could do the work committed to his hands, so that in after centuries those who came after him should see that he was the inspirer and organizer of the great religious movement which was to include all mankind in its benefits ; whereby he could withhold his followers, even though he himself had passed away, from giving his name to the body he had called into existence, that all glory might be given to Him who is Head of the Church, so that the name of Christ might still be the name above every name. We beseech Thee to receive at our hands the dedication of this tablet which we bring in consecration to this great man's memory, and through him to the Lord Jesus Christ who called him into His precious service. Grant that we today in our own behalf, and in behalf of those we represent, may catch such inspiration from this service that Christ shall seem nearer and dearer to us, and it shall be a greater joy to work in the service of Christ, to witness for the truth, and to aid in winning souls into His kingdom. Grant that we may feel how empty this ceremony would be if in unveiling this tablet—that the memory of this great servant of Jesus Christ may have further perpetuation—we did not come into completed consecration to the service of our Lord. May we catch his spirit today ; may it be within us to work with the spirit in which he wrought. May his mind, in so far as it was a mind in Christ, be in us, and may we plant ourselves in a firm footing on the truths he apprehended and which were so precious to him. May the Word of God be the word of man, and may we hold the truths fast and be prompt to receive any new light which shall break forth from the Word of God, and so may this body of Christians, which worships and works in the Congregational way, be quickened and brought into higher loyalty to Christ. We thank Thee for this hour, and we thank Thee that Thou

didst put it into the hearts of Thy servants to accomplish this pious work. Help us to cherish the memory of those whom Thou hast called away from us, to remember those who have thus wrought, those who are unable to be with us, but who are with us in spirit ; and help them to feel that wherever they are, they have helped to bear witness to the truth. May Thy Spirit descend upon us, and grant that in all our hearts there may be such a working of the Divine Spirit that we may be called into loyalty to Jesus Christ ; that conscience may have new dominion over us ; and that we may work with new heart to bring all men everywhere into the faith and fellowship of the Son of God. We ask it in the name of Him who loved us with infinite love, and who gave Himself to die for us on the cross, and who is the risen Redeemer. May He pour in His Divine Spirit upon our lives, that we may work day by day and live in Him and in the Spirit, to Whom be praise evermore. Amen.

Dr. Palmer then formally consummated the dedication of the tablet in the following sentences:

Now, therefore, we, Samuel C. Bartlett, Eliphalet W. Blatchford, George E. Day, Morton Dexter, John K. McLean, Charles Ray Palmer, and William A. Robinson, by authority to us intrusted, IN THE NAME OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA — delegates from the Congregational Union of England and Wales and from the International Council of Congregational Churches lately assembled in London, together with representatives of Yale University, the University of Leyden, and Mansfield College in Oxford, present and assisting — do solemnly set apart and dedicate this Bronze Tablet, which we have erected, to the perpetuation of the venerable and sacred

memory of the erudite scholar, the devoted minister, the saintly man, whose name it bears—JOHN ROBINSON, M.A., the Pastor of the Pilgrim Church, the projector and spiritual father of the Plymouth Colony; and we declare this dedication duly and irrevocably accomplished. And for the grace vouchsafed to that blessed man, and to our forefathers, and to us their descendants and fellow servants—to God Almighty, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, we give praise now and evermore! Amen.

Turning to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the city of Leyden, he also addressed them thus:

To the Honorable, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

GENTLEMEN: This tablet, which we have brought from our far away home and dedicated to the perpetual remembrance of John Robinson, we now take pleasure in committing to your honorable keeping. We heartily thank you for the gracious permission to erect it here. We thank you also for the kindly sympathy with us in our filial purpose, manifested by your presence with us today. To you, and to your successors forever, we now convey and deliver this memorial in which we feel so deeply interested, assured that our trust is by you cordially accepted, and that it will be safe in your hands. Receive with it, gentlemen, assurances of the highest consideration on the part of ourselves and of the churches and institutions we have the honor to represent; and also of our best wishes and our prayers for the peace and progress of the churches of Leyden, and of all the churches of this ancient and honorable realm.

Several responses to this address were then made. The first speaker was Mr. E. van den Brandeler, who spoke in Dutch as follows:

Very Reverend Gentlemen: The Ecclesiastical Commission of the Netherlandish Reformed Church, which I have the honor to represent on this occasion, tender to you their thanks for the manner in which you have performed an act of filial regard, in doing which neither pains nor expense have been spared. You have not been deterred by the distance from crossing the ocean and coming to us in order to devote this hour to an impressive ceremonial. We are proud to see this elegant and at the same time simple monument which adorns our church. Tell it far and wide, gentlemen, on your return to the New World, that in the Netherlands, also, hearts beat at the memory of John Robinson. He was a great man, who bravely strove for his faith, and labored with unsparing self-sacrifice to promote the religious welfare of his congregation. It is appointed to man once to die. Even great men die; but the memory of the righteous is blessed forever. The Ecclesiastical Commission regard it as a sacred duty to hold this monument in honor, and gladly take it under their protection.

The next speaker was the Burgomaster of the city of Leyden, Mr. E. M. De Laat de Kanter. He also spoke in Dutch, and as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen: The celebration in which we here unite has rather a religious than a civil character, yet it is not exclusively religious. It commemorates the time when the Pilgrim Fathers settled in Leyden, and the welcome they received from the authorities and citizens. All this has not been forgotten, but is gratefully remembered by their posterity. The visits so often made to the old

memorial stone show that the memory of all this survived in their hearts. The sphere of our city government is different from that of the Ecclesiastical Commission. All that we, on our part, can do, is to see that the memorial tablet is treated with proper regard by our people. There is no reason to fear the contrary. We are living no longer in a time of religious animosity, when men hate and despise each other for differing in opinion. I am reminded by this occasion of the time of persecution which made the coming of your ancestors to this land both desirable and necessary. It is not so very long—not more than half a century—since the principle of entire religious freedom has been recognized. At heart it was held by our people, but the abolition of the laws which interfered with it was forgotten. It was only when dissenters were persecuted more on account of the law than on account of their opinions, that those laws were abolished. And now I assure you that, so far as it depends upon the executive authority of the city of Leyden, the memorial tablet shall be safe with us. If the memory of Robinson was honored by us before, it will be none the less now that this monument is erected. As you return to your own country, present to your people the assurance that we shall ever think of you, your posterity, and your ancestors, with respect. The memory of the Pilgrim Fathers has now once more been revived by this memorial tablet. In Leyden it shall be safe.

The representative of Leyden University, Prof. A. Kuenen, D.D., spoke first in Dutch. Said he:

In the name of the Leyden University, which in the absence of the Rector Magnificus I have the honor to represent, I thank the Committee for having invited us to be present at this ceremony. In doing so they have met a wish which we cherished; perhaps I ought to say they have recognized what we might claim as a right.

Wherever honor is paid to the memory of John Robinson, the Leyden University may not be wanting. The orator of the day has reminded us that Robinson, although the years of his college life had long passed, was registered here at his own request as a student in theology. His object certainly was not simply to enjoy the privileges which were then accorded to the members of the University. No; it was because he was heartily in sympathy with the view of Christian truth which was zealously and ably defended by the majority of its professors, and wished to share in their scientific life. It is testified of him that he took part also in the controversy of those days. Several of the Leyden professors were among his friends, and when, in 1625, his remains were buried in this very church edifice, representatives of the University were among the mourners.

Since that sorrowful day more than two centuries and a half have passed; but yet—we have the evidence of it before us—John Robinson is living on in the grateful remembrance not only of his spiritual descendants, but of the whole North American people. We esteem it a privilege to join by our presence in the beautiful tribute now paid to his memory. Opinions and forms pass away, but the principle represented so well by Robinson and his congregation remains eternally true, and claims our entire sympathy. For conscience' sake they left their native country and sought refuge here. They made every sacrifice for the liberty of serving God in accordance with their own convictions, and therefore they receive only what is their due in the place of honor they hold in the period of history anterior to the existence of the North American Republic. The memorial tablet, consecrated by a grateful posterity to their leader, Robinson, honors and adorns our city. But beyond this it may be added that in Leyden, which owes its flourishing state and its University to its struggle for freedom, and in near proximity to the Univer-

sity whose vital principle is and will ever be liberty, this monument has found its appropriate place.

And now, having spoken in Dutch, as became the representative of a Dutch university, I beg to add a few words in English :

Ladies and Gentlemen: When you have gone back to America, tell your countrymen that the citizens of Leyden and the members of its University are proud to possess in the midst of us the monument you have dedicated today, and that we like to consider it as a pledge of the future lasting friendship of both the countries — America and our Fatherland — whose early history, as that monument testifies, is so closely identified. Tell them that we say that in that monument we have a pledge of hearty coöperation in the common love for civil and religious freedom.

The closing speaker was Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, D.D., principal of Mansfield College, Oxford University, England. His address was as follows:

It is as a connecting link between Holland and America that I am called to stand here. The American people are still English, and for the English people Holland has done many services of the kind she rendered when she gave to John Robinson a home. Your victory was ours; if defeat had come to you in the struggle with Spain, we could never have prevailed. The event which distinguished your town and founded your University, your delivery from your city's great besiegement, saved our freedom. On your soil, though for our common good, our Sidney shed his blood. Here, when once you had won your freedom, you gave a hospitable home to all who had need. Our fugitives learned from your Mennonites the principles of the toleration they returned to teach to their own people. Our Ames, your Amesius, forsook his own home, took part

in your high debate at Dordt, and settled as professor at Francker. Later Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye found here a home, and learned the principles of freedom and independency which they returned to argue for in the Westminster Assembly. Your hospitable welcome was not denied to the men who found the England of the Commonwealth an uncongenial home, while your Salmasius in stately Latin defended our king and accused our people, and our Milton in still statelier Latin defended our people and accused our king. Here, too, came our Scotch Covenanters and waited through evil days for the brighter times that were to dawn. On the walls of your library stands a tablet which tells that the dust lies here of John, Earl of Loudoun, one who contended and suffered much in our stern Northern wars. In the same period Gilbert Burnet, later a prelate of the English Church, helped to make a happier home for your William and our Mary, and to prepare your prince to become our king. And near his court lived a quiet scholar, John Locke, who used the leisure of his exile to write certain letters on toleration, which did much to create a broader freedom in our land. And in the century that followed, when to our fathers the English universities were closed, the learning that enabled Lardner to write his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, and Neale his *History of the Puritans*, was obtained here.

Our peoples, then, have lived in closest terms of intercourse. You have been generous in your hospitality to our persecuted men and causes; and it is to me a proud privilege to be allowed to stand here and confess our obligations. Long may our peoples, our faiths, and our churches live together in holy and beautiful friendship, and be united in their common and faithful service of freedom, civil and religious! By these we stand, and the name we have this day honored sanctions and consecrates our common and mutual love!

At the end of these addresses the audience sang Mrs. Hemans' hymn :

The breaking waves dashed high
 On a stern and rock-bound coast,
 And the woods against a stormy sky
 Their giant branches tossed ;
 And the heavy night hung dark
 The hills and waters o'er,
 When a band of exiles moored their bark
 On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
 They, the true-hearted, came ;
 Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
 And the trumpet that sings of fame ;
 Not as the flying come,
 In silence and in fear —
 They shook the depths of the desert gloom
 With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
 And the stars heard and the sea ;
 And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
 To the anthem of the free.
 The ocean eagle soared
 From his nest by the white wave's foam,
 And the rocking pines of the forest roared —
 This was their welcome home !

What sought they thus afar ?
 Bright jewels of the mine ?
 The wealth of seas, the spoils of war ?
 They sought a faith's pure shrine !
 Aye, call it holy ground,
 The soil where first they trod !
 They have left unstained what there they found —
 Freedom to worship God.

After the singing, Dr. Palmer concluded the exercises with the benediction.

The Committee of the National Council cannot close its report without putting on record an expression of its appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by Professor J. F. Weir, of the School of the Fine Arts in Yale University, in the selection of the style of the tablet and the design of the "Mayflower;" by Mr. E. F. Aucaigne, connected with the Henry Bonnard Bronze Co., of New York, in his intelligent and sympathetic superintendence of the construction and shipping of the tablet; and by Mr. F. de Stoppelaer, of the famous publishing house of E. J. Brill, of Leyden, through his manifold, unwearied, and indispensable coöperation in respect to the reception, erection, and dedication of the memorial.

For the Committee.

GEORGE E. DAY.
CHARLES RAY PALMER.
MORTON DEXTER.

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REV. JOHN ROBINSON, M. A.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS
IN STILES NEW PLAZA
IN 1620
BURIED UNDER THIS HOUSE OF WORSHIP
IN MEMORIA REVERENDI PATRIS
A.D. 1691

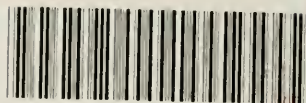
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